NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

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CHAPTER 1

400 YEARS AGO, THERE WAS A WAR...
...A TERRIBLE WAR BETWEEN THE BLACK DEMONS AND THE HUMANS WHO HAD ALREADY SUBDUED THEIR COUSINS, THE WHITE DEMONS.
ON THE EVE OF THEIR DEFEAT, THE BLACK DEMONS ISSUED A WARNING TO THEIR ENEMIES:
"OUR KIND SHALL SOMEDAY BE RESURRECTED, AND ON THAT DAY, WE WILL ANNIHILATE YOUR ENTIRE RACE."
DON'T BARE YOUR TEETH AT *ME*.
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU MUST FEEL...
...BUT I CAN'T SAY I APPROVE OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
THIS TIME...
I'LL LOOK THE OTHER WAY.
BUT IF YOU KILL AGAIN...
...I'LL SHOW YOU *MY* TEETH.

WHACK
OOF!
CRASH
THUD
AUGH, THAT HURT!
H-HOW DARE YOU HIT US!
YOU'RE JUST A GIRL!
SHE'S SCARY!

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET...
...FOR BEATING UP ON INNOCENT GIRLS.
CONSIDER IT YOUR DIVINE PUNISHMENT!
EEK! SOMEBODY, SAVE US!
CRACK
CRACK
THEY'RE LUCKY YOU'RE BOTH SO DAMN WEAK!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY BUILDING UP THOSE MUSCLES, HM?
EEEEEK!
HMPH.
THEY GOT SO ANGRY WHEN WE TURNED THEM DOWN...
TH-THANK YOU SO MUCH!
YOUR CHEEK ALL RIGHT, MISS?
YES.

RUSTLE
SHEESH!
YES, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
TRY NOT TO GET CAUGHT BY WEIRD CREEPS AGAIN, `KAY?
LATER, THEN.
I SWEAR, MEN THESE DAYS ARE JUST GETTING LAMER AND LAMER!
EVERY SINGLE ONE OF `EM!
ARIA! OVER HERE!
WHERE WERE YOU? WE WERE LOOKING EVERY-WHERE!

THEY WERE MAKING TWO GIRLS CRY!
I FELT SO SORRY FOR THEM!
I have a soft-spot for girls
LET ME GUESS, YOU LET ANOTHER MONKEY-MAN HAVE IT, RIGHT?
HA HA HA!
TRASH ?
THE WORLD IS A LITTLE SAFER NOW, THANKS TO ME.
JUST TAKING OUT SOME TRASH.
BACK THEN...
OH, THAT'S A NICE THING TO SAY.
AND THAT'S WHAT GOT YOUR PARENTS INTO AN EARLY GRAVE!
...I WAS STILL NAIVE.
TOTALLY! I'M STARVING!
SO, WHERE TO NEXT? WANNA HANG OUT AT THE USUAL SPOT?
MY MAMA USED TO TELL ME...
..."HELP THOSE IN NEED."
YOU KNOW, PEOPLE FIGHTING ON THE SIDE OF JUSTICE DON'T LIVE VERY LONG THESE DAYS.

I HUNG OUT WHEN I WANTED...
...AND WENT TO SCHOOL WHEN I WANTED.
DON'T YOU HAVE A TEST COMING UP SOON? YOU ARE SURE CONFIDENT.
I DID WHATEVER I WANTED.
I ALREADY THREW MINE OUT.
IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME.
THAT'S HOW I SPENT MY DAYS.
...UNTIL I MET HIM.
THAT IS...

HEY THERE.
YOU GUYS FREE?
NOPE, WE'RE VERY BUSY.
WHOA! O-OKAY, WE GOT IT.
NYAH!
SORRY FOR ASK-ING!
C'MON, DON'T START THAT WITH ME.
LET'S GO HANG OUT SOME-WHERE.
I SAID WE'RE NOT INTERESTED...
GLARE
WHEN YOU'RE AROUND, ARIA, WE DON'T EVEN HAVE TO WASTE OUR TIME TURNING DOWN MEN.
GRR!
NOT EVEN THE LAW CAN KEEP THOSE CREEPS ON A LEASH.

EXACTLY
I GET IT NOW SO ANY MAN THAT TRIES TO PICK YOU UP IS AUTOMATICALLY THE ENEMY BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOM
THEY'RE JUST THE TYPE THAT USED TO MAKE PASSES AT MY MAMA WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG
THE WORK WAS TOO MUCH, AND SHE KEELED OVER
THANKS TO THEM, SHE ENDED UP A SINGLE MOTHER.
YUCK!
THERE'S A DEAD BODY!
SO, YOU GUYS WANNA DO SOMETHING FUN? I'M SICK OF THE SAME OLD THING.
LET'S GO ALL OUT THIS TIME!
AAAAAAH!
CHATTER
ザワザワ
CHATTER

WHAT A SHAME IT HAPPENED IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.
STEP BACK, PLEASE.
STAND BACK.
I CAN'T SEE IT!
PEEK
I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING BECAUSE OF THE SHEET.
And I'm only 5'5"
NO FAIR, ARIA! YOU'RE TOO TALL!
SEEMS IT WAS ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE.
I'M SURE YOU HEARD OF THE EARLIER CASE OF A MAN BEING EATEN BY A STRAY DOG.
OH.
EXCUSE ME, SIR? DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED?
STRAY DOG?
I CAN UNDERSTAND GETTING BITTEN BY ONE, BUT "EATEN"...?
WHAT ON EARTH ...?
OH MY GOD! IT'S A TOTAL GORE FEST!

All over the place?
WH-WHO'S GIVING THAT REPORT?
YUCK! A Ssevered HAND FLEW ALL THE WAY OVER HERE!
THE BODY'S BEEN RIPPED UP AND TORN ALL OVER THE PLACE!
CHATTER
YOU, THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE!?
GET OUT IMMEDIATELY! NO CIVILIANS ALLOWED!
SORRY, I JUST HAD TO TAKE A LOOK.

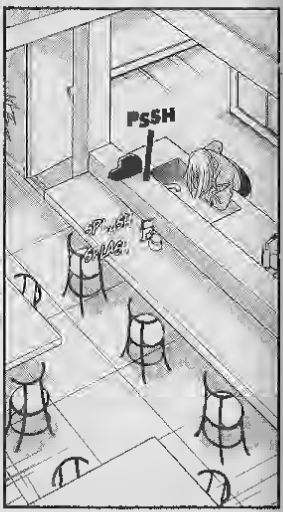
.....!
HUH...?
FEAR!
SHOVE
WE SAID GET OUT!
WHOA!
THUD
WAH!
WAH!

THUD
GRIN
GRAB

SORRY 'BOUT THAT.
LATER.
HUH?
JUST NOW...
HUH?
HE RAN INTO—
WHAT'S THE MATTER, ARIA?
UH...
HE...
HE...
HIM? HE'S GONE.
BAH
JUST NOW...

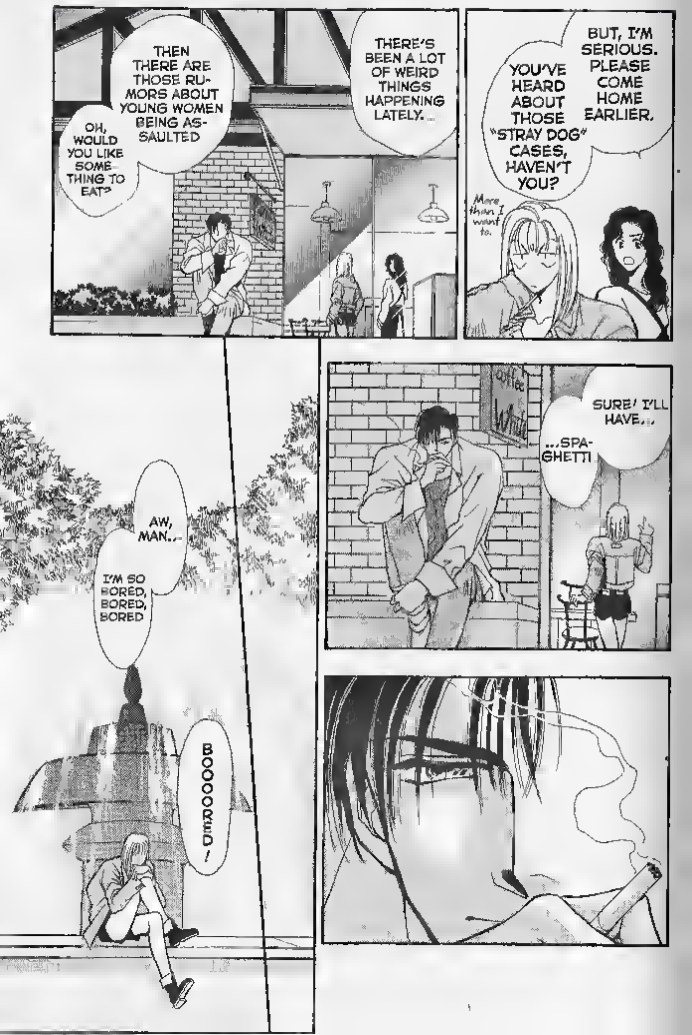
Coffee shop
White
PSSSH
I'LL KILL HIM!
I SWEAR, I'LL KILL HIM!
Quiet! There are police here!
WHERE'D THAT BASTARD GO? HE'S DEAD MEAT!
I ALREADY TOLD YOU. HE'S GONE.
What happened!?

HE MISSED BY 2 MILLIMETERS.
PHEW...
BOY, WHAT A NIGHT.
THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE, BUT LOOKS LIKE I MADE IT.
A virgin's first kiss!
Right about here.


PSSH

ARIA? YOU'RE HOME?
BUT, JEEZ! WHAT WAS WITH THAT PERVERT!?
HE PISSED ME OFF SO BAD!

C'MON...
DO YOU HATE HELPING ME OUT THAT MUCH?
REALLY! YOU'RE RARELY HERE WHEN THE CAFÉ'S OPEN.
I'M NO GOOD AT HANDLING CUSTOMERS.
IT'S ONLY 10!
YOU'RE LATE, YOU DELINQUENT!
THAT'S NO TIME FOR A HIGH SCHOOLER TO COME HOME!
OH, FUJIKA-SAN. YEAH, I'M BACK.
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU TO STOP ACTING THAT WAY WITH ME?
DON'T START WITH THAT!
THANKS FOR LOOKING AFTER ME, THOUGH.
OH, I WAS JUST THINKING HOW YOUR NAGGING REMINDS ME OF MAMA.
WELL, EXCUSE ME!
WHAT?
You're staring at me
SHE'S MY MOM'S SISTER SHE'S BEEN RAISING ME SINCE MY MOM DIED WHEN I WAS 13.
FUJIKA-SAN IS SO KIND


THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF WEIRD THINGS HAPPENING LATELY...
THEN THERE ARE THOSE RUMORS ABOUT YOUNG WOMEN BEING ASSAULTED
OH, WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO EAT?
BUT, I'M SERIOUS. PLEASE COME HOME EARLIER.
YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THOSE "STRAY DOG" CASES, HAVEN'T YOU?
More than I want to.
SURE! I'LL HAVE...
...SPAGHETTI
AW, MAN...
I'M SO BORED, BORED, BORED
BOOOORED!

IT'S A WEEK-DAY, SO I WON'T FIND ANY OF MY FRIENDS THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING.
BUT IF I GO BACK HOME, FUJIKA-SAN'LL WORK ME TO THE BONE!
BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, IF I KEEP KILLING TIME HERE, THEN NO DOUBT-
HEY THERE, LITTLE MISSY.
YOU FREE?
Not again!
SORRY, BUT I AM VERY BUSY AT THE MOMENT.
IF YOU'RE NOT BUSY, WE COULD-
Um SUDO
THEN, WON'T YOU TRY MAKING SOME TIME IN YOUR "BUSY" SCHEDULE FOR ME?
Y-
Y-
YOU-

YOU'RE THAT GUY FROM LAST NIGHT!
HA HA HA
YOU REMEMBER?
HOW COULD I FORGET? AFTER YOU DID THAT... THAT...
OH, THAT THING ABOUT RUNNING INTO YOU?
NO, WHEN YOU KI-
KISS-
YEAH, SORRY ABOUT RUNNING INTO YOU.
NO, AFTER THAT.
WHAT?
WHA?
SHEESH, FORGET ABOUT IT! AS LONG AS YOU DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE.
I'll forgive you if it was just an accident
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
WHY DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU?
GLARE
IT'S OKAY IF I CALL YOU "ARIA," THEN?
THAT'S WHAT I HEARD YOUR FRIENDS CALL YOU.

IF YOU ALREADY KNEW, THEN WHY'D YOU ASK !?
I'M SAKURA.
SAKURA KIJIMA.
...ARIA.
THIS GUY COULD WRITE A BOOK ON BAD PICKUP LINES.
QUIT BEING SO FAMILIAR WITH ME!
WELL, SEE YOU LATER, SAKURA.
I'M GOING HOME NOW.
GRAB
EEEEK!
REACH

SLAP SLAP SLAP
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU PERVERT!?
HEH HEH. DID I SCARE YOU?
YOU... BASTARD!
DON'T COME NEAR ME AGAIN, YOU SICK-
HUG
Y-YOU LITTLE...
WATCH YOUR STEP.
THERE'S A HOLE DOWN THERE.
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
That was dangerous
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN STOP ME WITH A HUG!
BONK
AH HA HA HA HA!
QUIT SCREWING AROUND WITH ME!
I CAN'T STAND SKIRT-CHASERS LIKE YOU!
IS THAT...

...BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOM?
I OVERHEARD YOUR FRIENDS TALKING.
H-HOW LONG WERE YOU EAVESDROPPING FOR?
Now you're starting to scare me.
THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
NOT REALLY.
ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, YOUR RELATIVES... YOUR BLOODLINE.
IT WOULDN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE IF I KNEW ANYWAY.
What are you trying to get at?
WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO FIND OUT?

HE'S NOT THAT BIG OF A PROBLEM IN THE GRAND SCHEME OF THINGS.
YOUR FATHER WAS PRETTY INSIGNIFICANT.
THAT MAY BE SO.
RUSTLE
?
!
HUFF
HUFF

BLOCK
WHAT IS THAT THING?
WHA...?
.....
YOU STILL WANDERING AROUND, DOGGY?

IS HE... YOUR DOG?
NO, JUST AN ACQUAINTANCE.
A ACQUAINTANCE?
THIS CAN'T BE...
ITS SIZE AND SHAPE ARE ALL WRONG.
IS THAT REALLY A DOG? OR...
...A MONSTER?
HEY! I SAW THE THIRD CORPSE FOR MYSELF.
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO LAY OFF.
EXCUSE ME? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
DO YOU MEAN YESTERDAY'S MURDER REALLY WAS DONE BY A DOG?
YES.
THIS GUY DID IT.
GRRR
KILL
HUH?

HIS MASTER WAS A GIRL THAT WAS ASSAULTED BY A MAN.
SOON AFTER COMING HOME, SHE KILLED HERSELF.
RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.
I PITY HIM, REALLY.
THAT'S WHY HE'S OUT FOR REVENGE.
HE SAID HE'D DO IT AGAIN TODAY.
LEAP
JUST HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT MUCH?
.....

DASH
DASH
!
DASH
LEAP
WHA...?
WHAT THE HECK !?
OKAY, CATCH YA' LATER.
CATCH YA' LATER? YOU MEAN YOU'RE LEAVING ME!?
WHAT ABOUT THE POLICE?
BUT WHAT WOULD I TELL THEM?
.....
That a giant monster just leapt up a tree?

HEY, ARIA!
I FORGOT TO MENTION!
ABOUT THAT THING YESTERDAY...
I DID THAT ON PURPOSE.
WH-WH-WH-WH—
WHAT DID YOU SAAAAAY!?
QUIVER
QUIVER
He's gone!
YOU BAS-TARD!
うぅ〜ん
WAAAAAAH!

MY, OH MY.
STOMP
STOMP
YOU SURE THAT WAS A GOOD IDEA UPSETTING HER LIKE THAT, SAKURA?
I DUNNO.
BUT TOWAKO-BAASAN WAS RIGHT.
IT'S DEFINITELY HER.
DID YOU MAKE SURE TO DOUBLE-CHECK?
I'VE WATCHED YOU TWO YESTER-DAY AND TODAY..
...AND JUDGING BY YOUR STYLE OF CHECKING..
...YOU'RE COMING OFF AS A TOTAL DEGENERATE.
I WAS JUST SO HAPPY TO SEE HER, I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF!
HA HA HA!
BUT I'M GLAD.
THIS WAY...
...I CAN FINISH THIS WITHOUT HAVING TO BECOME A MURDERER.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, ARIA? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO LOSE YOUR COOL.
LIKE...
CAN'T BELIEVE THAT JERK, MESSING WITH MY HEAD LIKE THAT.
LIKE...
SLAM
WHAT'S WITH THAT SKIRT-CHASER!?
THIS IS SO HUMILIATING! SO INCREDIBLY HUMILIATING!
WHAT A SLOPPY DRINKER.
Isn't that just juice?
WHAAAAA!
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE NOT AFRAID OF THOSE STRAY DOG CASES.
I JUST HEARD FROM SOME-ONE...
THE TWO OF US ARE HEADED HOME.
AFTER THIS, LET'S GO PARTYING!
I WANNA FORGET EVERY-THING!
OH, SORRY.

...THAT THERE'S BEEN A FOURTH VICTIM.
SO, YOU SHOW YOURSELF AGAIN, DEGENERATE
THE NAME'S SAKURA...
ARIA.
DON'T SAY MY NAME LIKE WE'RE FRIENDS.
I KNEW IT.
THE FOURTH VICTIM JUST TURNED UP.
YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT DOG THAN YOU'RE LETTING ON.
... DON'T YOU?
IT'S A SECRET. YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME, EVEN IF I TOLD YOU.

I'M NOT NAIVE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE EVERYTHING I HEAR...
...BUT I'M NOT A BORING ADULT WHO WON'T BELIEVE ANYTHING, EITHER.
SKUF
TRY ME.
I LIKE YOU.
SKIP THE JOKES.
YOU WANNA GO OUT?
THAT THING YOU SAW...
...IS A MONSTER.

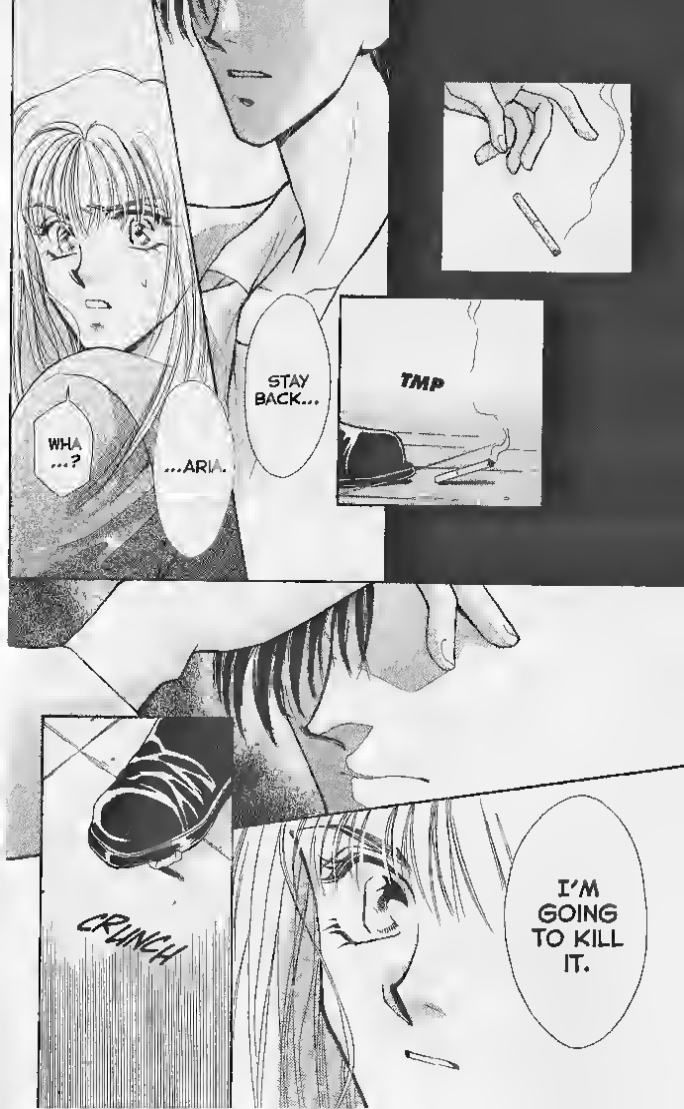
I DON'T KNOW THE DETAILS, BUT...
...SOMETIMES, CREATURES THAT LIVE TOO LONG BECOME MONSTERS.
THEY BECOME DEMON BEASTS.
FOR EXAMPLE, RESENTMENT CAN BE THE TRIGGER THAT SETS THEM OFF, LIKE THAT LAST ONE WE SAW.
IN REALITY, HE'S REALLY NOTHING BUT A DECREPIT, OLD DOG
THAT'S PRETTY MUCH IT.
YOU BELIEVE ME?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I BELIEVE, BUT AFTER WHAT I SAW...
...I KNOW I BELIEVE SOMETHING
ABOUT HALF OF IT.

YOU KNOW SO MUCH. JUST WHAT ARE YOU?
NOW ANSWER ME THIS ONE QUESTION.
I AM...
.....
OOOOO
ARRRRRRR
!

!
H...
HOW DID IT GET SO CLOSE!?
SWISH

SLAM
DASH
DASH
DASH

WE HAVE TO--!
IT'S TOO--
WH-WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
FROOOOM
STRIDE
SAKU-


WHA ...?
...ARIA.
STAY BACK...
TMP
I'M GOING TO KILL IT.
CRUNCH

WOOOOSH
SHIVER
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO HIM?
IT'S LIKE HE'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON!
THAT LOOK IN HIS EYES...

SHUDDER
I'VE WARNED YOU TWICE ALREADY.
THE FIRST ONE WAS TO FULFILL YOUR REVENGE.
I OVER-LOOKED THE SECOND TWO, BUT...
THE AIR ROUND HIM IS CHANGING.
THE AIR IS FREEZING!
YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO FORGET...
...THE TASTE OF HUMAN FLESH, AND THE GIDDINESS OF A SLAUGHTER.
SO YOU STARTED EATING INNOCENT PEOPLE.
AND ON TOP OF THAT, NOW YOU'VE TURNED YOUR FANGS AGAINST ME.
YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF GUTS.

GRRR...
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN LIVING? 20 YEARS? 30?
...EVEN MORE THAN THIS MONSTER...
...EVEN MORE THAN THIS DOG...
WHY IS IT THAT...
W-WAIT... A MINUTE...
KUTA
TREMBLE
KUTA
...I'M EVEN MORE SCARED..
...OF SAKURA!
YOU'VE PICKED THE WRONG GUY TO MESS WITH.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S A DEMON LIKE YOURSELF ...
...HE'S LIVED WELL OVER 600 YEARS.

VOOM
!!

YELP
ROAR
GRAWR!
GHRK

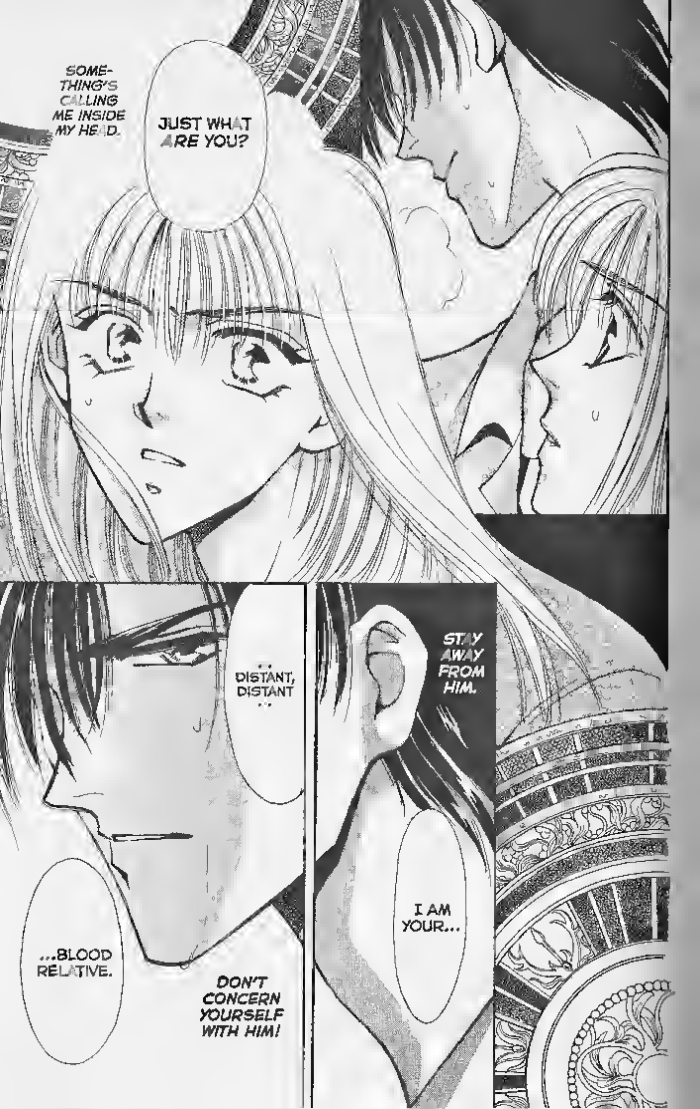
MUNCH
CHOMP
WHINE
WHINE
WHAT, IS THAT ALL YOU'VE GOT?
SSH
SSH
SSH
AH HA HA HA!
HA...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
DON'T QUIT NOW! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A DEMON, AREN'T YOU?
MY HEAD...
I FEEL LIKE I'M GOING INSANE!
HA...
HA HA HA HA!
WHINE
WHINE
OH!
WHINE
WHINE
SAKURA!

CHOCO
.....
WHAT AM I GRABBING HIM FOR?

SHOOOO
GRAB
SLIP...

PLEASE DON'T LET GO.
NOT YET.
HUFF...
NOT UNTIL HE'S SUBSIDED COMPLETELY.


SOME-THING'S CALLING ME INSIDE MY HEAD.
JUST WHAT ARE YOU?
STAY AWAY FROM HIM.
I AM YOUR...
DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF WITH HIM!
...BLOOD RELATIVE.
DISTANT, DISTANT

I KNOW SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN!
ONLY YOU, ARIA, CAN RID ME OF THIS DEMON.
THAT IS WHY I CAME.

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS
CHAPTER 2

THESE CREATURES BECOME...
...BLACK DEMONS.
SOMETIMES, A CREATURE THAT HAS LIVED TOO LONG WILL "CHANGE."
IF THEY WERE ORIGINALLY LONG-LIVED TO BEGIN WITH, THEN THEY GAIN VARIOUS IMPOSSIBLY STRONG POWERS.
THESE CREATURES ARE REJECTED FROM HEAVEN AND EARTH AND ARE FORCED TO LIVE IN A PLACE APART.
PLEASE DON'T LET GO. NOT YET.
NOT UNTIL HE'S SUBSIDED COMPLETELY.
CLENCH
JUST WHAT...
...ARE YOU?

I AM YOUR DISTANT, DISTANT BLOOD RELATIVE.
ONLY YOU, ARIA, CAN RID ME OF THIS DEMON. THAT IS WHY I CAME
RID ME OF THE DEMON LIVING INSIDE OF ME
WHAT ...?
IT'S CRUMBLING.

THE REALITY...
...BENEATH MY VERY FEET...
...CRUMBLES GENTLY, BUT...
...WITH A GREAT CRASHING SOUND.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
Y-YOU'RE HURTING ME! LET GO!
THE BLACK SHADOW
YOU SAW IT, DIDN'T YOU?
THUG
!
JUST LIKE THAT PATHETIC DOG, I'VE BEEN POSSESSED BY A DEMON.

AND WHILE THAT DEMON'S AWAKE...
...I'M NOT MYSELF.
I BECOME MY "OTHER HALF" WHO HAS BEEN SWALLOWED BY HIS MADNESS.
AND ONCE I'M AROUSED, THERE'S NO WAY TO STOP ME.
AT THIS RATE, I'LL BECOME A KILLER.
SQUEEZE...
MY "REAL" SELF MAY EVEN--

NO MATTER HOW HARD I MAY TELL MYSELF THAT I DON'T WANT TO KILL...
SQUEEZE
SO...
ARIA...
SAKURA !!
JOLT
WHAT DO YOU...
...WANT WITH ME?

WHAT–
SHIRO ?
WHAT IS ALL THIS? THAT DOG! DON'T TELL ME YOU–
.....
Boy I he scared me!
JEEZ, WHAT A MESS!
SO YOU DID IT AGAIN, HUH?
DON'T "HEY" ME! I WAS WONDERING WHERE YOU'D DISAPPEARED TO!
HEY THERE, SHIRO.

YEAH, THIS GIRL STOPPED ME.
THAT GIRL!?
YOU WERE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CITY FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
I'M JUST GLAD ONLY A DOG WAS KILLED!
WHAP
STOP YOU? I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
REALLY?
AND WOULD YOU LET GO OF MY HAND ALREADY!?
IS THAT SO? HMM...
WH-WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, GRAMPS?
SOB
SOB
What is it now?
I may have a stash...
I'M ONLY 29!
but I'm no gramps!
WELL, I'M ONLY 17.
You're 12 whole years older than me!

MY HEAD'S SPINNING
...!
SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU CRY.
BUT WHAT DOES SAKURA MEAN I CAN GET RID OF IT? AND WHAT'S THIS ABOUT BLOOD RELATIVES?
I DON'T GET ANY OF IT...
...ALSO KNOWS...
THIS GUY...
...ABOUT THE DEMON THAT'S POSSESSED SAKURA.
WHO'S CRYING?
I JUST DON'T KNOW IF I WANT...
...TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH A FREAK LIKE YOU.
YOU'RE FILLING ME WITH SUCH OPTIMISM.

GROWL
GROOOOWL
HEY..
SAKURA..
TWITCH
TELL ME WHAT THE HELL...
...ALL THIS IS ABOUT!
GASP
KROOM!
HE'S STILL ALIVE!

EEEEEEEK!
CLASH
NO, SAKURA! DON'T!

SKKIDD
THAT WAS QUITE A SURPRISE.
I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D MADE IT
WAVER
YELP!
Y...
YOU...

NOT AGAIN!
HUFF
HUFF
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER ROUND!
NOW, COME!
DRAG
SAKURA, YOU'VE–
STRIDE
SHIVER
HE'S THE ONE THAT CAME LEAPING AT US FIRST.
WHAT ARE ALL THE SHOCKED FACES FOR?
SLITHER
SLITHER

TMP
WOLF!!
HE'S GONE!
HMPH.
DASH
WHERE DOES HE THINK HE'S GOING IN HIS CONDITION?
HEH HEH HEH
HE...
HEY!
SA-KURA!
DASH!

COME ON! YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!
HUH?
GRAB
YOU NEED TO STOP SAKURA!
DIDN'T YOU SEE HIS EYES !?
IF WE GET TOO CLOSE TO HIM, HE MIGHT KILL US, TOO!
W-WAIT A MINUTE!
I KNOW WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS, BUT–
EXACTLY! THAT'S WHY–
NO, I CAN'T !
BOOM
AROOOOO

BAH
DAMN IT!
HUH ...?
HE STILL DIDN'T EXPLAIN IT TO YOU!?
DAMN IT! SAKURA, THAT IDIOT!
I...
I DON'T GET ANY OF THIS!
I'M ALREADY CONFUSED ENOUGH AS IT IS!
OH, GREAT!
HE WAS HOLDING ME SO HARD IT LEFT MARKS.

GRAB
"SO, ARIA," WHAT!?
SO, ARIA...
NO MATTER HOW HARD I MAY TELL MYSELF THAT I DON'T WANT TO KILL...

FLIT
BEAUTIFUL... THE COLOR OF YOUR BLOOD.
HA HA HA HA!
HA HA!
FLOP
HEH HEH
SHOOOOM
AH HA HA HA
AH HA HA HA HA HA

WHAT, DEAD ALREADY?
POOR, SAKURA. HE'S GETTING WORSE EVERY DAY.
KICK
I CAN'T
I CAN'T SPEAK. I'M TOO SCARED!
This is too much!
GULP
.....
THAT WAS TOO FAST. LET ME HAVE SOME MORE FUN.
...MORE.
MORE.
MORE!
CRAP! I KNEW I SHOULD'VE BROUGHT THAT GIRL WITH ME!

WHIP
SAKURA!
DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?
DRAG
DRAG
DRAG
K-KNOCK IT OFF, SAKURA!
WHAT ARE–

NO NEED TO BE SO AFRAID, SHIRO.
I JUST. .
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF KILLING YOU.
...WANTED TO KNOW...
. .WHAT COLOR YOUR BLOOD WAS
S... SAKURA!
IF I KNEW YOU'D BE LIKE THIS, I'D HAVE DRAGGED THAT GIRL WITH ME, EVEN IF IT MEANT HAVING TO PUNCH HER LIGHTS OUT FIRST!
DAMN IT!
TMP
GRAB

HH
ZHHHH!!
AND JUST *WHO* WERE YOU PLANNING ON PUNCHING !?
M-MISS! WHY~?
I DON'T *KNOW* WHY!
I GUESS I'M JUST NOT THE TYPE OF GIRL WHO CAN ABANDON PEOPLE.
ESPE-CIALLY WHEN...

...THEY'RE IN BIG TROUBLE!
BUT THERE'S NOTHING MORE I CAN DO!
GET UP! WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT. HE'S GOING TO KILL US, RIGHT?
DAMN IT, SAKURA...
IT'S ALL RIGHT!
THERE'S A WAY TO GET HIM BACK WITHOUT RUNNING AWAY!
WHAT...?
EITHER THE DEMON WILL STAY ON A RAMPAGE UNTIL IT'S SATISFIED...
...OR SAKURA WILL SNAP OUT OF IT HIMSELF.
YOU SHOULD'VE TRIED LISTENING TO HIM A LITTLE MORE!
FORGET ABOUT IT ALREADY! LET'S GO!
OR...
GRAB
HUH?

SORRY, KID.
I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO—
AND A ONE, AND A TWO...
HUH!?
HUH?
WHAT THE --?
SAKURA! DON'T MOVE! HIYAAAA!
AAAAAH!

SLAM!
AH
!
OW...
OOOOW...

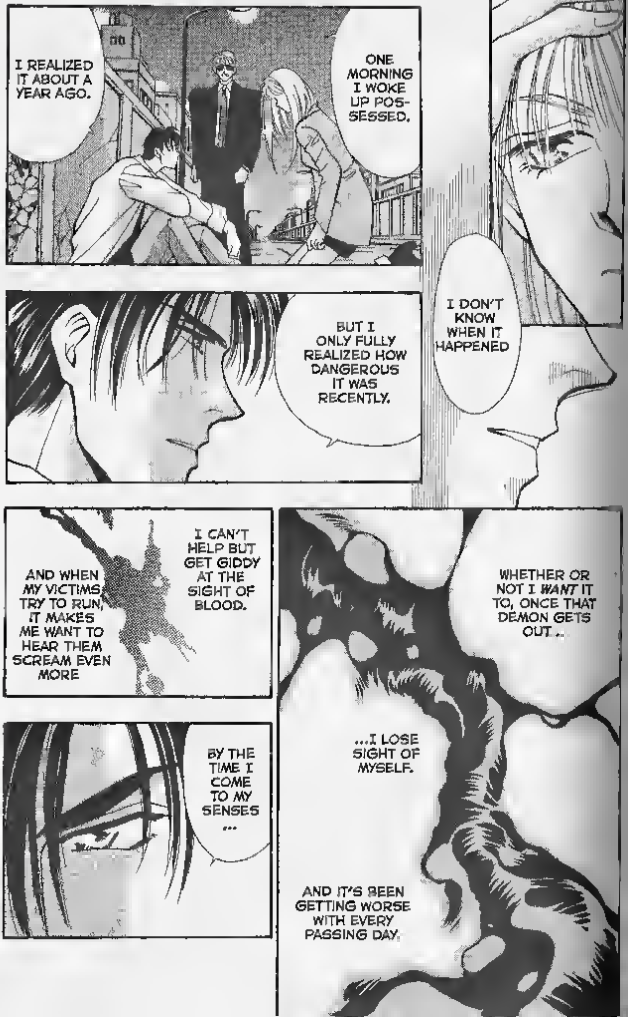
WHAT IF SHE'D BEEN HURT?
NO NEED TO OVER-DO IT, SHIRO.
SHOVE
WHOA!
WELL...
AT LEAST I'M AWAKE.
PHEW...
HE'S BACK TO NORMAL

.....
THE MOMENT I TOUCHED HIM...
JUST LIKE LAST TIME.
AND NOW.
COULD IT BE..?
SEE? THIS IS...
...WHY I CAME TO YOU.

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE, ARIA...
...WHO CAN STOP ME.
AND ONCE AGAIN...
...REALITY...
...TAKES ANOTHER STEP AWAY.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, ARIA YAMAGUCHI!?

I'M...
...ENJOYING REALITY.
SEE? THEY WERE TAUNTING THOSE GIRLS AND MAKING THEM CRY!
THEY'RE THE ONES WHO STARTED THIS WHOLE THING.
THIS IS HOW SHE ALWAYS IS, SENSEI.
EX-CUSE ME?
...DON'T FORGET THAT OLD SAYING, "VIOLENCE DOESN'T SOLVE ANY—"
I WHOLLY SUPPORT YOUR SENSE OF JUSTICE, BUT...
NOW, NOW, YAMA-GUCHI
WAIT A MINUTE, SENSEI!
DIZZY
...HER WAY OF MAKING THEM STOP IS A LITTLE TOO PASSIONATE.
WELL, IN ARIA'S CASE...
DIZZY

AREN'T YOU LITTLE MISS POPULAR, ARIA
What the?
H-HEY!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO SCOLD HER MAJESTY, THEN SCOLD ME!
Hurry your majesty! Go while he's distracted!
PLEASE DON'T SCOLD HER!
YAMAGUCHI-SAN'S NOT THE ONE AT FAULT HERE!
WH-WHAT IS IT?
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, YAMAGUCHI!
THANKS, GUYS
See ya
YEAH, KINDA...
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
WHAT'S THE MATTER, ARIA? YOU'VE BEEN SHORT-TEMPERED EVER SINCE LAST NIGHT.


I REALIZED IT ABOUT A YEAR AGO.
ONE MORNING I WOKE UP POSSESSED.
I DON'T KNOW WHEN IT HAPPENED
BUT I ONLY FULLY REALIZED HOW DANGEROUS IT WAS RECENTLY.
I CAN'T HELP BUT GET GIDDY AT THE SIGHT OF BLOOD.
AND WHEN MY VICTIMS TRY TO RUN, IT MAKES ME WANT TO HEAR THEM SCREAM EVEN MORE
WHETHER OR NOT I *WANT* IT TO, ONCE THAT DEMON GETS OUT...
...I LOSE SIGHT OF MYSELF.
BY THE TIME I COME TO MY SENSES ...
AND IT'S BEEN GETTING WORSE WITH EVERY PASSING DAY.

I'M JUST GLAD I HAVEN'T KILLED A PERSON YET.
WHY IS IT...
...THAT JUST BY TOUCHING YOU–
BEATS ME.
BUT RIGHT NOW, I DON'T CARE WHAT THE REASON BEHIND IT IS.
I'M JUST GLAD I GET TO BE TOUCHED BY A WOMAN LIKE YOU

GRR!
WHO DOES THAT GUY THINK HE IS!?
TRYING TO MESS WITH MY HEAD LIKE THAT!
AND HE DIDN'T EVEN EXPLAIN HIMSELF THAT WELL!
STOMP
STOMP
WHAT WAS THAT? TRY SAYING THAT TO MY FACE AGAIN!
B-BUT I CAN'T LEND YOU MONEY...
WHACK
ARGH, I'M SO UPSET!
She sure has lost it.
Yup.
HEY THERE, LITTLE MISSY. YOU ON YOUR WAY BACK HOME FROM SCHOOL?

WHAT A PLEASURE SEEING YOU AGAIN. YOU'RE NOT WITH GRAMPS TODAY?
THANKS FOR THE COMPLIMENT.
HE'S STILL ASLEEP.
We were out late last night
YOU LOOK SO CUTE IN YOUR SCHOOL UNIFORM.
SO YOU SHOWED UP AGAIN.
JEEZ, DON'T YOU GUYS HAVE SCHOOL OR A JOB TO GO TO?
SCHOOL ?
FLASH
I DON'T GO. I HAVEN'T GONE FOR ABOUT A YEAR NOW. TOO MUCH OF A PAIN
WHAT? SHEESH, I'M PROBABLY THE LAST PERSON WHO WANTS TO GO TO SCHOOL, AND I MAY PLAY HOOKY EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, BUT I STILL--
I REALIZED I WAS POSSESSED A YEAR AGO.

HEY!
LOOK, ARIA!
A KITTY-CAT! HOW CUTE!
ARE YOU...
GOING HOME?
NOT GOING HOME? IT'S MORE LIKE HE CAN'T GO HOME
LOOK, IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY TO ME, SAY IT.
DID YOU COME HERE TO FINISH YOUR EXPLANATION FROM YESTERDAY?
EXPLANATION?
ABOUT THE BLOOD RELATIVE THING AND STUFF.
AND WHO DID YOU HEAR ABOUT ME FROM, ANYWAY?
DID I SAY THAT? FUNNY, I DON'T REMEMBER.
PURR
PURR
OH, SO NOW YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL ME, IS THAT IT?
FINE, BUT TELL ME THIS ONE THING.

DOES IT HAVE TO BE ME?
CAN'T IT BE SOMEONE ELSE?
NO, THERE IS NO "OTHER"
ONLY YOU, ARIA.
IS THERE ANY OTHER WAY?
FINE THEN.

...IF YOU LOST CONTROL LIKE THAT AGAIN.
YOU'D BE A NUISANCE TO SOCIETY...
YOU CAN GRAB ONTO MY HAND WHENEVER YOU NEED TO!
I SAID I ACCEPT!
HUH?
ME TOO.
PUTTING AN INNOCENT GIRL LIKE ME IN DANGER. TOTALLY PATHETIC!
.. YOU'RE THE MOST PATHETIC GUY I'VE EVER SEEN!
WHAT-EVER THE REASON BEHIND IT,

YOU'RE THE COOLEST GIRL...
...I'VE EVER SEEN.
WHY IS IT...
...AND SELFISH, AND IMMATURE...
EVEN THOUGH HE'S PATHETIC...
...I STILL CAN'T HELP BUT LOVE HIS SMILE...
...AND FEEL SORRY FOR HIS PAIN.

YOU SURE THAT'S THE GIRL?
SKREECH
I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE A GIRL LIKE HER...
...HAS THE POWER TO CONTROL ONE OF THOSE MONSTERS
AFTER WE'VE USED HER TO SEAL UP THAT MONSTER...
...WE CAN KILL SAKURA
JUST LIKE THOSE OTHER MONSTERS
BUT AS LONG AS HE'S BY HER SIDE, WE CAN'T GET A FOOT IN.
YOU DON'T THINK HE KNOWS ABOUT US, DO YOU?
HE COULDN'T

BECAUSE RIGHT UP UNTIL THE LAST SECOND THAT HE'S STILL SELF-AWARE...
...THAT LIFE IS *HIS*.
BUT HE WON'T BE THAT EASY TO KILL.
HEY! ARE YOU EVEN LISTENING?
IT'S NOT LIKE WE CAN WALK AROUND HOLDING HANDS AROUND THE CLOCK.
BUT WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

NO MATTER HOW BADLY HE WANTS TO KILL YOU...
NO MATTER WHAT MONSTER POSSESSES YOU...
UP UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT...
THIS IS NOT A JOKE!
LIKE... THIS?
BUT I DON'T MIND IF YOU WANT TO HOLD MY HAND NOW.
...I WON'T DO ANYTHING SO RECKLESS.
DON'T WORRY. AS LONG AS NOTHING LIKE LAST NIGHT HAPPENS ..

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

CHAPTER 3

GYAAAAHH!
...AH!
AAAH!
NNGH!
ARRGH
URGH!
AH...
AH!
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

THEY DREAMT OF REALITY WRAPPED IN A NIGHTMARE.
THE NAME OF THE ONE...
HUNTING THEM DOWN
THE DREAM TOLD THEM...
I MUST
...KILL HIM.
THAT NIGHT, MANY PEOPLE DREAMED.
MUMBLE
DADDY... DADDY, I'M SCARED!
IT TOLD THEM..
..THEIR FATE WAS DRAWING NEAR.
AH..
AH...
THAT DREAM TOLD THOSE PEOPLE...

AND THAT
NAME WAS...
SAKURA.

TA-DAH!
HEY THERE, GRAMPS!
IT'S BEEN A WEEK SINCE I LAST SAW YOU.
SHIRO, YOU AWAKE?
WHAT THE---!?
WH-WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE!?
I BROUGHT HER ALONG.
I'M SHOCKED. IT'S ALMOST EVENING, AND YOU'RE STILL IN BED?
...with sunglasses on.

CUT ME SOME SLACK, WOULD YA'? I FINALLY FINISHED WITH WORK, AND THOUGHT I'D CATCH SOME SHUT-EYE...
Ah, hm
SO YOU DO WORK!
OF COURSE
I'm a reporter
THEN IT SEEMS YOU DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM WITH MONEY
AND I HEAR THIS GUY'S YOUR COUSIN, RIGHT GRAMPS?
THEN I SUPPOSE YOU'LL BE WILLING TO PAY FOR HIM.
HUH?
I MEAN HIM SKIPPING OUT ON THE BILL AT MY CAFÉ EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST WEEK!
THIS IDIOT!
SORRY, SHIRO. I DIDN'T HAVE ANY MONEY ON ME.
HA HA HA!
DON'T THINK A SIMPLE APOLOGY WILL FIX ANYTHING!
HA HA HA!
TAKE A LOOK AT THIS BILL!

THE REAL REASON I CAME WAS TO SEE YOU, ARIA
BUT...!
ONE WHOLE WEEK? YOU SURE ARE NICE.
NICE, NOTHING!
HE KEPT SHOWING UP AT THE CAFÉ, COMPLAINING ABOUT HOW HUNGRY HE WAS!
I HAD TO BUY HIM FOOD...
...JUST TO MAKE HIM SHUT UP!
YOU REALLY ARE KIND-HEARTED, THOUGH.
WHAT?
WHY?
BECAUSE I MISSED YOU
OH...
I NEVER KNEW YOU GUYS HAD GOTTEN SO CLOSE.
BUT IF THIS IS GOING TO TURN INTO A ROMANCE NOVEL, DO YOU MIND TAKING IT OUTSIDE?

DROOP
THANKS A BUNCH, SHIRO WE'LL CONTINUE THIS OUTSIDE...
YOU, SHUT UP!
OLD MEN LIKE ME DON'T BELONG HERE
SQUIRM
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?
HEY! WAIT A MINUTE!
NOW LEAVE ME ALONE.
MY WALLET'S IN MY SUIT POCKET GO AHEAD AND TAKE IT.
I CAN'T TAKE ANY MORE OF THIS.
I NEVER SHOULD'VE SAID THAT.
I SAID I ACCEPT!
YOU CAN GRAB ONTO MY HAND WHENEVER YOU NEED TO!
AND BECAUSE OF THAT, EVER SINCE THEN...
I GUESS I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOUR BEING A MAN-HATER.
WH-WHO'S HE? IS HE YOUR... YOUR-

NOW, I'LL JUST SAY THIS ONCE, BUT. .
PLEASED TO MEET YOU I'M ARIA'S AUNT.
OH, WELL. GOOD LUCK TO THE BOTH OF YOU!
NO, NO! YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG!
JEEZ, IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!
Yours to do as you want to her.
.. YOU LAY ONE FINGER ON HER, BUDDY, AND YOU'RE DEAD!
...IT'S NO WONDER EVERYONE HAS THE WRONG IDEA!
WITH HIM HANGING AROUND ME DAY IN AND DAY OUT...
YOU'RE BEING A NUISANCE, SO QUIT—
ARIA
LISTEN, I'M NOT GOING TO BEAT AROUND THE BUSH WHEN I SAY THIS.
HEY, YOU'RE THE SAME STRAY FROM BEFORE.
Meow
YOU SURE CAN CLIMB UP A WAYS.
This is the 3rd floor!
NO, THAT'S OKAY.
I'M GOING HOME NOW.
WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING TO DRINK?
I'LL HAVE IT READY IN A JIFF

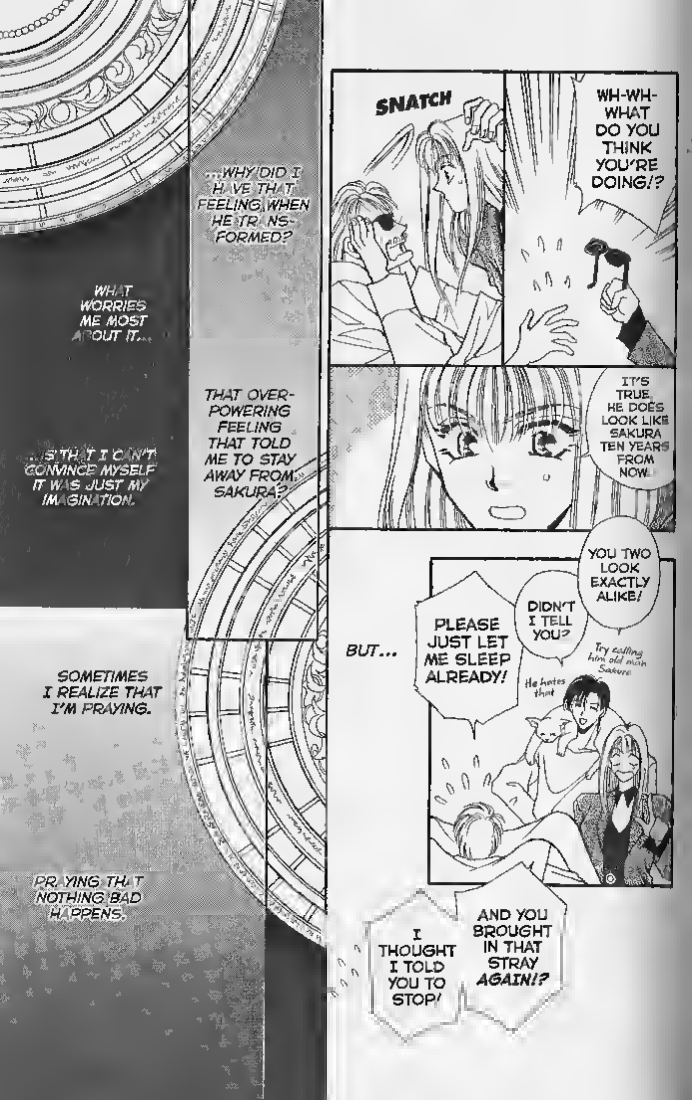
LET'S DRINK TOGETHER.
OKAY?
ERK!
I fell for it!
SMILE
OH, BUT I COULDN'T--
JEEZ...
You wait right here I'll get you a can of cat food
WHY IS IT THAT HIS SMILE GETS ME EVERY TIME?

WELL, THEN...
LEAVE IT TO ME.
JUST ONE GLASS, THOUGH.
WE'RE TERRIBLY SORRY.
I CAN'T HAVE ANY-ONE ELSE DYING ON ME.
AND YOU'LL BE NO MATCH AGAINST HIM ON YOUR OWN
HE WON'T LEAVE HER SIDE FOR A SECOND.
IT'S NO USE NOW.
WE CALLED YOU TOO SOON

THE ONLY ONE DYING...
...WILL BE *HIM.*
RRR
GOD... DAMN IT!
RRRR
RRR
RRRRR
YES, YES. I'M HERE!
.....
YES. I UNDER-STAND.
.....

NOW LET'S SEE IF QUEEN OF THE CAFE LIKES THE TASTE.
OKAY, ALL DONE.
FOUR
much!
SPRINKLE
SPRINKLE
Y you're not even measuring it...
Sweet tea
GLUB
Milk
GLUB
NOW LISTEN HERE ...
"LOVE."
Ha ha ha!
IT'S MY SECRET INGREDIENT.
HOW CAN IT BE GOOD?
The prep- him was crazy!
IT'S GOOD.
I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO ASK FOR ANYTHING ANYMORE.
HE'S LETTING ME STAY HERE FOR AS LONG AS I LIKE.
IT'S TOTALLY FINE.
I MEAN, THIS IS GRAMP'S PLACE AND ALL.
ANYWAY, ARE YOU SURE IT'S OKAY FOR US TO BE HERE?

EVEN THOUGH I MAY KILL HIM SOME DAY.
EVEN THOUGH I'M DANGEROUS, HE'S LETTING ME STAY BECAUSE I'M HIS COUSIN
HE WORRIES ABOUT ME
SHIRO REALLY IS A NICE GUY.
...YOU WANNA KNOW WHY SHIRO NEVER TAKES OFF HIS SUN-GLASSES?
THIS MAY BE SUDDEN BUT...
WAH!
I ADMIT SOMETIMES I GET NERVOUS, THOUGH SO FAR IT'S BEEN VERY PEACEFUL.
BY THE WAY, ARIA...
THIS PAST WEEK...
...SAKURA NEVER LOST CONTROL, JUST LIKE HE SAID.
ACTUALLY, NOTHING'S HAPPENED AT ALL.


...WHY DID I HAVE THAT FEELING WHEN HE TRANSFORMED?
WHAT WORRIES ME MOST ABOUT IT...
...IS THAT I CAN'T CONVINCE MYSELF IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION.
THAT OVERPOWERING FEELING THAT TOLD ME TO STAY AWAY FROM SAKURA?
SOMETIMES I REALIZE THAT I'M PRAYING.
PRAYING THAT NOTHING BAD HAPPENS.
SNATCH
WH-WHWHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING!?
IT'S TRUE. HE DOES LOOK LIKE SAKURA TEN YEARS FROM NOW.
BUT...
PLEASE JUST LET ME SLEEP ALREADY!
DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
YOU TWO LOOK EXACTLY ALIKE!
He hates that
Try calling him old man Sakura!
I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU TO STOP!
AND YOU BROUGHT IN THAT STRAY AGAIN!?

AND PRAYING THAT SAKURA KEEPS SMILING.
ARIA, WAIT UP.
I'LL WALK YOU HOME
THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I DON'T NEED IT.
THE LAST THING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT IS MY GETTING IN TROUBLE! I CAN TAKE--
I'M COMING WITH YOU.
I SAID I'M ALL RIGHT!
HEY, SAKURA!
If you come again they'll soon will start asking questions!
IF YOU'RE GOING OUT, THEN TAKE THAT CAT WITH YOU!
SURE THING. WAIT JUST A SEC, ARIA.
NOW WHERE DID THAT CAT GO?
I'M TELLING YOU, I'LL BE FINE! SEE YA!
.....

I HAD A FUN TIME
Even though I fell for his tricks again.
OH WELL.
WOW, IT REALLY IS DARK.
I MEANT TO GO HOME EARLIER, BUT...
WHAT IS IT NOW?
ONE GUY? NO, TWO.
THEY DON'T SEEM TO BE...
...YOUR TYPICAL PICK-POCKET OR DEGENERATE, THOUGH.

SMOTHER
.....
GRAB
WHAT ARE YOU AFTER?
IF IT'S MONEY, I DON'T HAVE ANY.
Well, I DID get a little from grandma, but...
THUD
!

NO!
NUDGE
UH-OH.
SHUT UP AND DON'T MOVE.
WAIT A MINUTE, WHY'S IT GOTTA COME TO THIS...?
FOR A PAIR OF DEGENERATE PICKPOCKETS, ISN'T THIS GOING A BIT TOO FAR?
WH-WHAT WAS THAT!?
GRIP
THAT'S NO ORDINARY GIRL'S STRENGTH!
SLAM
!

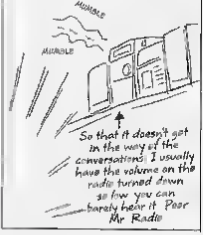
I SHOULD'VE GUESSED.
YOU CHOSE THE WRONG GIRL TO MESS WITH, OLD MAN.
NOT ONCE.
SORRY, BUT I'VE NEVER LOST A FIGHT.
...IT SEEMS YOU'RE NO ORDINARY HUMAN GIRL.
MY MEN MAY BE JUST AS STRONG AS THE NEXT, BUT...
...PUT DOWN A *DEMON BEAST.*
NO,... YOU'RE THE TYPE OF HUMAN WHO CAN...

SHOCK
WH...?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HOW DID HE GET BEHIND ME SO FAST?
KADUM
KADUM
I didn't even see him!
DON'T WORRY. I WON'T HURT YOU.
I SIMPLY MEAN TO SPEAK WITH YOU WITHOUT THE COMPANY OF SAKURA
I WISH TO ASK FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN A CERTAIN MATTER.
ASSIS-TANCE IN WHAT?
THE EXTERMI-NATION OF SAKURA.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KID DING.
LIFT
OH, BUT I'M NOT

HUH?
WOOSH
WHA...
TAKE HER TO THE CAR.
IT CAN'T BE TRUE!
WAIT A SEC!
YOU STILL DON'T KNOW ANY-THING...
IF YOU'LL JUST COME WITH US, WE CAN TALK.
...I COULDN'T RESIST!
HE BARELY TOUCHED ME BUT..
KUUUH?
WH-WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
HUH?
DIZZ
...ABOUT HOW DAN-GEROUS THAT MAN IS!

Here's a question I get asked a lot in my fan letters. "What music do you listen to while you draw?" Usually I just leave the radio on while I work but I mainly listen to my assistants talking.

I swear, their conversations make me keel over with laughter. It's pretty amusing.



So that it doesn't get in the way of the conversations, I usually have the volume on the radio turned down so low you can barely hear it. Poor Mr. Radio.

IT'S A PLEASURE FINALLY MEETING YOU, SAKURA
SA...
SAKURA!
IT'S LIKE THEY'RE FROM A DIFFERENT WORLD!
JUST WHO IS THIS GUY?
THOUGH I MUST BE HONEST, I DIDN'T WANT TO SEE YOU JUST YET
WE STILL HAVE MUCH PREPARATION TO DO BEFORE THEN.
FINE, I'LL SAY JUST THIS ONE THING.
WELL THEN, LET'S JUST KEEP IT A SECRET FOR NOW.
NO I HAVEN'T HEARD ANY THING ABOUT THEM!
SAKURA
ANY IDEA WHO THESE GUYS ARE?
SAKURA?
OH, DIDN'T I MENTION THEM?

I SUPPOSE IT'S NO USE NOW THAT WE'VE MET...
SHALL I TELL HER NOW?
!?
IF I LOSE CONTROL AGAIN...
...I'M COUNTING ON YOU.
...WHO DOESN'T KNOW ANY-THING
TELL THE GIRL...
IF YOU DO THAT-
WH-WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? PLEASE STOP!

BANG
SA...
SAKURA!!

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW DANGEROUS A MONSTER HE IS?
OR HOW MANY PEOPLE HE'LL KILL?
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.
THAT'S WHY YOU PROTECT HIM.
WOBBLE
SKUFF
SAKURA!
.....
TINK
FLOOSH
SAKURA
THAT'S WHY WE DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE!
MY PEOPLE AND I KNOW VERY WELL.

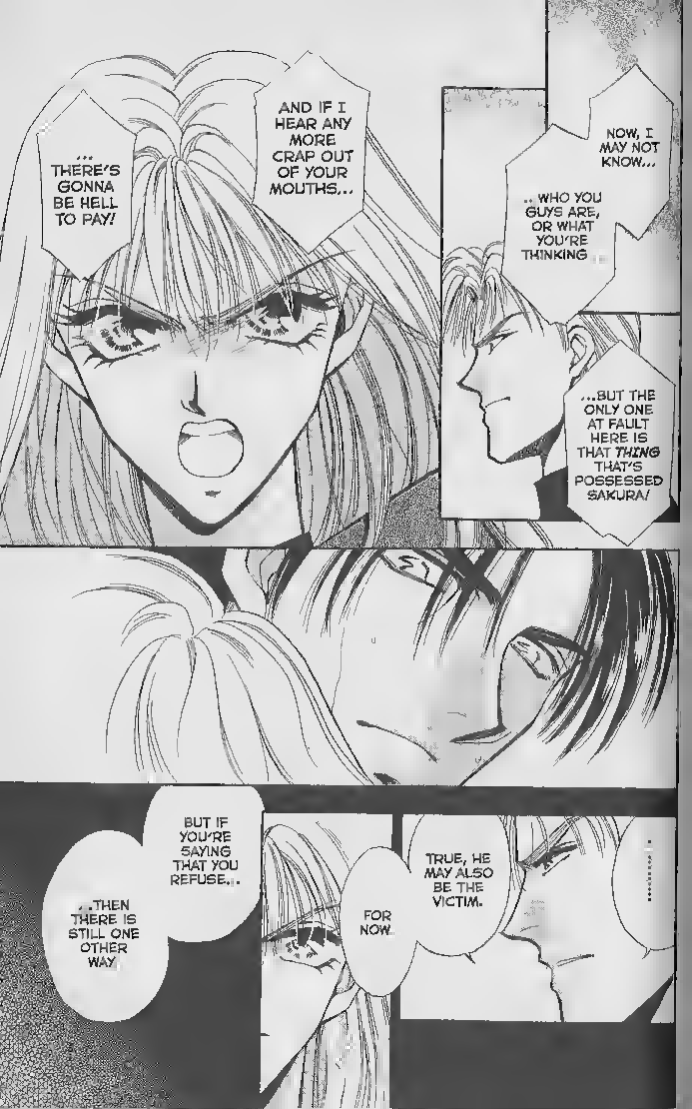
HOWEVER...
...NO ONE CAN KILL HIM.

CLUNK
AH!
IEE!
AAAH!
SAKURA!
TWITCH

.....
AH...
AAH...
PHEW
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN IT MYSELF.
WHO'D HAVE KNOWN IT COULD BE THIS EASY.
SIGH
.....

IT'S POSSIBLE ...WITH THAT GIRL.
HE'S ALREADY HURT COUNTLESS PEOPLE.
FIRST IT WAS THOSE WHO TRIED TO ELIMINATE HIM, JUST LIKE I'M TRYING TO DO
THEN IT WAS INNOCENT PEOPLE!
AND EVEN...HIS OWN F..MILY!

IF WE STOP HIM NOW—
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.
EVERY SINGLE MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY.
HE CAN'T RAISE THE DEMON YET.
JUST HOW WAS ANY OF THAT...
...SAKURA'S FAULT?


NOW, I MAY NOT KNOW...
..WHO YOU GUYS ARE, OR WHAT YOU'RE THINKING..
...BUT THE ONLY ONE AT FAULT HERE IS THAT *THING* THAT'S POSSESSED SAKURA!
AND IF I HEAR ANY MORE CRAP OUT OF YOUR MOUTHS...
...THERE'S GONNA BE HELL TO PAY!
.....
TRUE, HE MAY ALSO BE THE VICTIM.
FOR NOW.
BUT IF YOU'RE SAYING THAT YOU REFUSE...
...THEN THERE IS STILL ONE OTHER WAY.

DON'T TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF HIM.
HUH ...?
THIS WAY ...
WAIT!
NO ONE HAS TO DIE WHILE THE DEMON'S ASLEEP.
STOP!
WAIT! NO!
BANG
BANG
BANG

WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN!?
WH-WHAT ARE WE DOING ...
...UP HERE?
HUH ...!?
PEEK
.....
!

HE'S DOWN!
BLOCK
SAKURA!
OH MY GOD, SAKURA! YOU'RE BLEEDING!
SLIP
.....
IT'S BEST WE LEAVE IT FOR NOW AND RETURN HOME FOR THE TIME BEING.

ONE DAY HE'LL TAKE THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE...
...WITH THAT DEMON OF HIS.
WE KNOW THAT...
...SAKURA WILL CHANGE.
BUT, ARIA ..
..THINK IT OVER ONE MORE TIME.
YOU'RE STILL-
AND THAT DAY IS DRAWING NEAR.

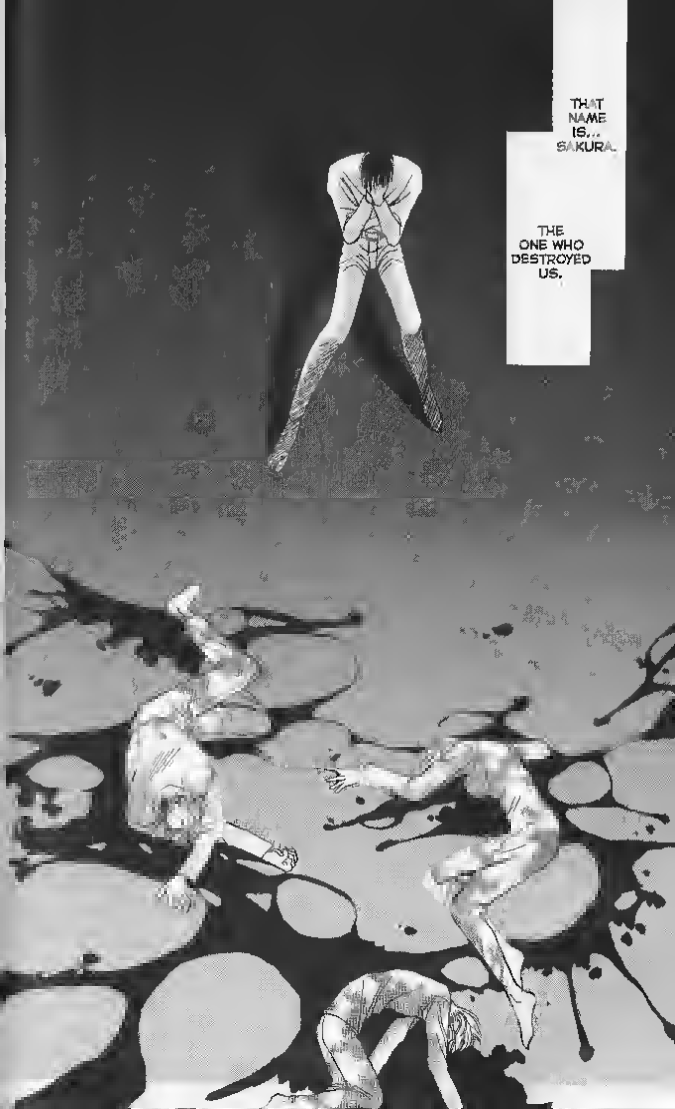
WE'LL BE BACK.
YOU CAN COUNT ON IT.
TELL SHIRO.
SKIFF
IT JUST DEPENDS
...ON HOW MANY WOUNDS HE SUSTAINED FROM THE BULLETS
INFORM HIM THAT HE'S INJURED.

SAKURA
SAKURA
SA-KU...
RA?
WE KNOW...
...THAT ONCE SAKURA CHANGES...

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS

CHAPTER 4

NO...
FATHER ...
MO... THER...
STOP... ME.
SOME-BODY... PLEASE STOP ME.
STOP THIS MONSTER ...


THAT NAME IS... SAKURA.
THE ONE WHO DESTROYED US.

I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE OUR RELATIVE'S FUNERAL. THAT MAKES IT...THREE YEARS?
LONG TIME, NO SEE.
SOME-BODY...
SOME-BODY..
.....
LET ME GUESS. YOU'VE COME TO KILL ME, TOO.
RIGHT, SHIRO?
JUST THE SAME AS ALL THESE "BLOOD RELATIVES" THAT I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN BEFORE.
UGH ...
DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME, OR YOU'LL END UP LIKE THESE SORRY SAPS.

...WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO SAVE YOU, SAKURA.
THERE'S SOMEONE...
THERE IS SOMEONE WHO CAN SEAL THAT DEMON.
I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU.
SPLASH

HURRY!
HURRY UP!
WHERE ...!?
WHO ...!?
I SAID CALL AN AMBULANCE! NOW!
THERE'S NO TIME FOR PETTY COMPLIMENTS, GRAMPS! CAN'T YOU SEE HE'S BEEN SHOT ?!
YOU CARRIED HIM UP HERE ALL BY YOURSELF?
THAT'S IMPRESSIVE, GIRL

HUG
I'M IN HEAVEN.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU BIG IDIOT!?
I'M TRYING TO SAVE YOUR SORRY-
POW
SMACK
RISE
JUST WHERE ARE YOU LOOKING!?
BUT IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS.
CALM DOWN ALREADY I CAN SEE HE'S INJURED
NOTHING SERI-OUS!?
OUCH, THAT SMARTS
GASP
I'M SO SORRY! I FORGOT YOU WERE HURT-
UWAAAAH!

CAN'T SAY IT DOESN'T HURT, THOUGH.
SAKURA,
YOUR WOUNDS—
THANKS TO THAT MONSTER IN ME
YEAH, I HEAL QUICKLY.
WHAT ...?
TREMBLE
WH-WHA—
TREMBLE
WHAT?
HE'S ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR TRIPLING MY PHYSICAL STRENGTH!
BUT IT SURE IS USEFUL, ISN'T IT?
Heh heh!
ACK!
BONK

I WAS SURE YOU WERE REALLY DEAD THIS TIME!
I WAS WORRIED SICK ABOUT YOU!
SO QUIT LAUGHING IT OFF LIKE IT'S NOTHING!
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT EARLIER?
I THOUGHT I KNEW ALL YOUR TRICKS ALREADY.
WAVER
WOBBLE
CLENCH
CLENCH
STUPID SAKURA!
Oh no! Here she comes again!
EEEK!
She's so scary!
UH... SORRY

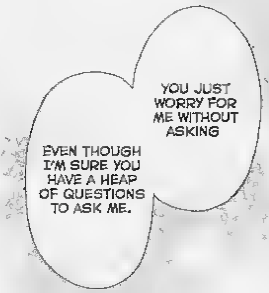
AAH...
PLOP
JEEZ!
JEEZ!
JEEEZ!
I JUST CARRIED A FULL-GROWN MAN FROM THE FIRST FLOOR!
I DON'T HAVE ANY STRENGTH LEFT.
Talk about stupid
BUT WHY DID YOU GO SO OUT OF YOUR WAY?
IF YOU NEEDED AN AMBULANCE, THEY WERE ONLY ONE PHONE CALL AWAY.
GASP!
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL BEING IN A MAD PANIC.
SORRY FOR SCARING YOU LIKE THAT.
I can't believe myself!

RUB
RUB
HUH?
ERR...
THERE'S NO NEED TO THANK ME.
BUT THANKS FOR WORRYING ABOUT ME.
Ow-!
You old geezer!
THERE'S NO PLACE HERE FOR AN OLD MAN LIKE ME.
WELL THEN, BEST TO LEAVE THE YOUNGUNS TO THEMSELVES.
OH, WAS THAT ALL?
I MEAN, I COULDN'T HAVE ANYONE CATCHING YOU IN YOUR CONDITION!
YES!
THEY'D PROBABLY HAVE A HEART ATTACK!
YOU CAN'T GO NOW, ARIA. IT'S WAY TOO LATE.
THIS TIME, I'LL TAKE YOU HOME MYSELF.

NO! GET TO BED! GET TO BED!
I CAN MANAGE THIS.
YOU'RE NOT COMPLETELY HEALED YET!
I'LL BE FINE! I CAN GO HOME BY MYSELF!
THOSE CREEPS FROM BEFORE TOLD US THEY WERE GOING HOME, REMEMBER?

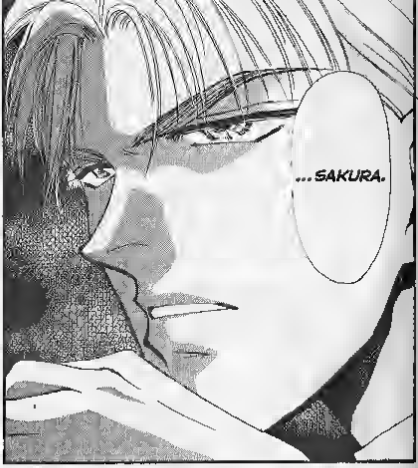
...NGH!
SAKURA!?
WOBBLE

KNOCK IT OFF!
SO VERY VERY KIND.
PAT


YOU JUST WORRY FOR ME WITHOUT ASKING
EVEN THOUGH I'M SURE YOU HAVE A HEAP OF QUESTIONS TO ASK ME.

YOU'RE SO KIND, ARIA
HUH?

BEEP
YES, I UNDERSTAND
IT'S JUST AS I THOUGHT
CLACK
THOSE BULLETS WEREN'T ENOUGH TO KILL HIM.
BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE ABOUT TO LOSE...
NOT TO YOUR MADNESS...
"SAKURA WILL CHANGE."
SHEESH.
NOW THAT YOU SAY THAT, I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASK YOU ABOUT ANYTHING!
I GET THE FEELING I WAS JUST DUPED.
EVEN BEFORE I ASKED.
"HE'LL TAKE THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE... WITH THAT DEMON OF HIS"
WHAT DID HE MEAN BY THAT?



Heres another question I get asked a lot in my letters "Who's your favorite musician?" Recently I've really gotten into "Enya" I just love her beautiful songs Only problem is, if I'm not paying attention, I may actually be lulled to sleep by the music!

That's why, whenever I'm working alone, I make sure to listen to really peppy Japanese songs B'z, or trf, or sometimes even the nostalgic TM Network

Oh, but King Show is also good, too

SORRY, NO CAN DO YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO CONVINCE SAKURA
You're more of a worry-wart than I thought
REALLY, I TOLD YOU I COULD MAKE IT HOME MYSELF!
Well I guess you're right
ALL'S WELL THAT END'S WELL.
HEY, AT LEAST HE'S NOT DEAD, RIGHT?
...SEEING HIS WOUNDS HEAL LIKE THAT.
YOU'RE A LITTLE STRANGE, YOURSELF
MOST GIRLS WOULD BE FREAKED OUT...
I'M USED TO IT.

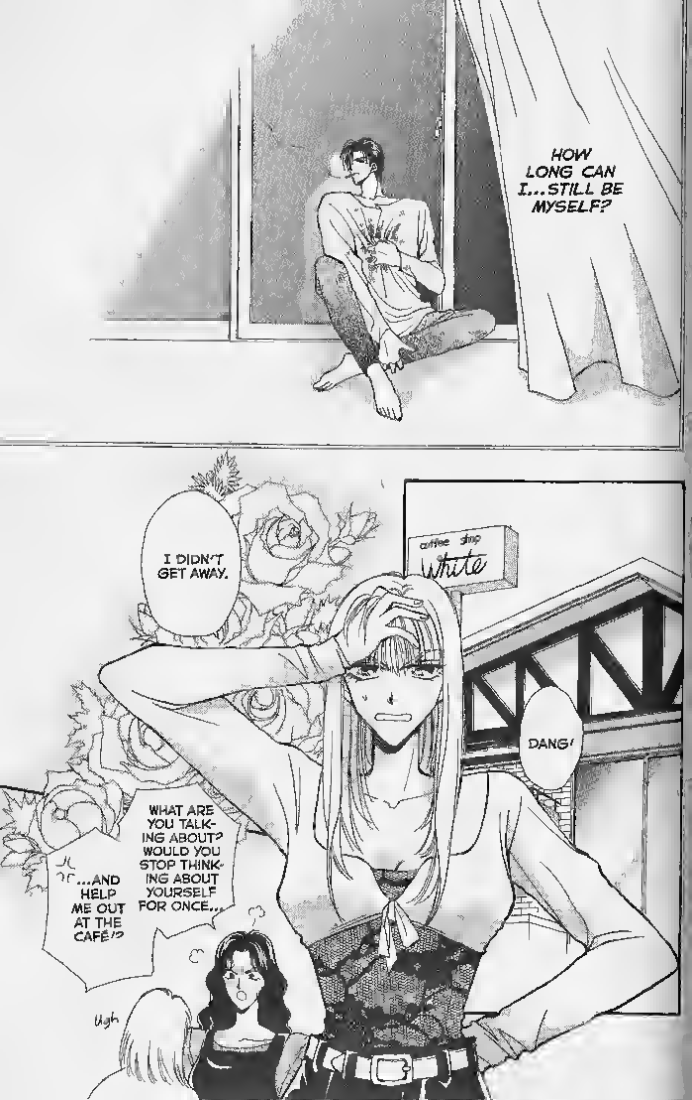
I KNOW YOU *KNOW* ABOUT THOSE GUYS.
YOU DIDN'T EVEN BLINK AN EYE WHEN YOU HEARD THAT SAKURA'D BEEN SHOT
JUST WHO *ARE* THOSE--
SORRY, BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU EVEN IF YOU ASK.
SAKURA DOESN'T WANT ME TELLING YOU.
WOULD YOU PLEASE STOP CALLING ME THAT?
Listen
You're making me cry.
HEY!
BY THE WAY, GRAMPS...
Grampa!
Now calling me by my first name? Well, at least it's better than "gramps"
FINE THEN... SHIRO.
LISTEN HERE, I LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF AS A GOOD-NATURED GIRL.
...BUT IF YOU GUYS START KEEPING SECRETS...
I'll rip you a new one!
H-HEY! WATCH IT!
This is dangerous!
WHAT? WHY NOT!?
WHO KNOWS. ♡
SAKURA WILL TELL YOU ALL IN GOOD TIME.
FOR NOW, YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO WAIT.

EVER SINCE HE FOUND YOU.
SAKURA MAY BE HAPPY AND CAREFREE THESE DAYS...
...BUT HIM SMILING...
.. AND LIVING PEACEFULLY IN MY HOME. .
...ONLY STARTED RECENTLY.
UP UNTIL THEN, HE'D BEEN CHASED AROUND BY CREEPS LIKE THEM
AND HE'D END UP LEAVING THEM HALF-DEAD
HE SAID IF HE KILLED JUST ONE PERSON ...
...IT'D BE THE END
HE WAS AFRAID HE'D KILL SOMEONE
HE WASN'T ABLE TO SLEEP WELL THAT WHOLE TIME.

IF HE KILLED JUST ONE PERSON ...
...HE, "HIMSELF," WOULD VANISH.
WHAT DID HE MEAN BY THAT?
.....
YOU GOT ME.

UNTIL HE MET ME...
...HE NEVER SMILED?
NOW HE SMILES TOO MUCH!
EITHER WAY, YOU SHOULD TRY ASKING SAKURA YOURSELF.
THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL YOU.
I MAY BE A NICE GIRL...
...BUT I WON'T LOSE TO YOU, SHIRO. I WON'T FALL BEHIND.
AND JUDGING BY WHAT YOU'VE SAID...
...YOU WORRY AN AWFUL LOT ABOUT HIM. EVEN THOUGH HE'S DANGEROUS.
STARE

GIVE THOSE BACK! HEY!
OOOH! I SWEAR YOU TWO LOOK THE SAME EVERY TIME! ♡
Who in their right mind wears sunglasses while driving at night?
WAH!
GOT-CHA!
YOINK
"IF HE KILLS JUST ONE PERSON..."
EVEN THIS SMALL AMOUNT OF PAIN... ... EXCITES HIM. HE'S STRUGGLING TO GET OUT.
SORRY, BUDDY, BUT I'M NOT LETTING YOU OUT SO EASILY.
HOW LONG CAN I HOLD HIM DOWN?
NOW BE A GOOD BOY AND SLEEP.
IT WAS NEVER LIKE THIS BEFORE.
OUCH...


HOW LONG CAN I...STILL BE MYSELF?
coffee shop White
I DIDN'T GET AWAY.
DANG!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WOULD YOU STOP THINKING ABOUT YOURSELF FOR ONCE...
...AND HELP ME OUT AT THE CAFÉ!?
Ugh

CRASH
OOPS!
CLATTER
CLATTER
SEE HOW MUCH I CAN DO!
FINE, I GET IT! I'LL WORK!
TURN
I TOLD YOU ALREADY! WE'RE NOT LIKE THAT!
For crying out loud!
...YOU MADE THAT NEW BOYFRIEND, YOU'VE BEEN STAYING OUT LATER THAN EVER!
EVER SINCE
AHHHH
SNEAK
I DON'T THINK I'M CUT OUT FOR THIS
HUH?
ARIA?
CRYING, I TELL YOU--
MY BIG SISTER IS PROBABLY CRYING IN HEAVEN RIGHT NOW!
I JUST DON'T GET YOU!
FOR BEING A GIRL, HOW CAN YOU BE SO ROUGH!?
SNEAK
SNEAK

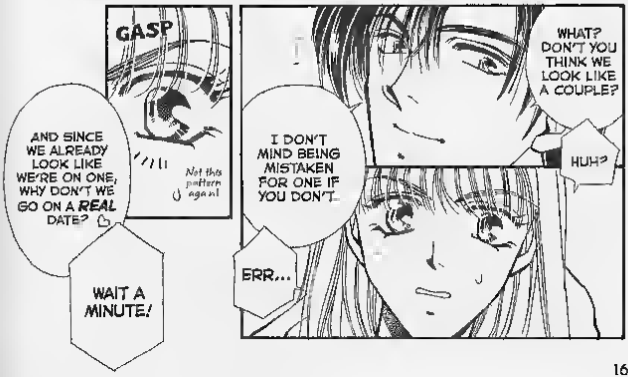
SURPRISE
YOU GOING OUT?
ACK!
AH, TOO BAD. AND I'D JUST COME BY TO EAT.
BROUGHT MY WALLET WITH ME AND EVERYTHING.
THAT'S MY WALLET, REMEMBER? AND I'VE STILL GOT WORK TO DO!
SAKURA!
ARE YOU FEELING BETTER NOW?
YUP, FIT AS A FIDDLE.
A-ANYWAY, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
THIS WAY, SHIRO!
WH-WH-WHAT?
ARU!
SLAM
DAMMIT! SHE GOT AWAY!

SLUMP!
OH, COME ON! IT WAS JUST A LITTLE RUNNING!
YOU REALLY ARE AN OLD GEEZER.
DON'T SAY THAT! DAMN!
ARIA, LET'S DROP THIS OLD GEEZER AND GRAB SOMETHING TO EAT.
I GOT HIS WALLET.
I think they're selling something in that park over there
HEY!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, SAKURA! WHEN DID YOU—
I SAID WAIT!
OH NO...
OH GOD, NO.
IT'S SAKURA!

SAKURA ...!
TREMBLE
HE'S... COME!
SAKURA'S COME!
TREMBLE

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. EVEN AFTER THEY FIRED THEIR GUNS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CITY--
I DIDN'T SEE ANY OF IT ON THE NEWS
BY THE WAY, SAKURA ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED THE OTHER DAY--
THANKS FOR THE MEAL, SHIRO. EVEN THOUGH YOU'RE NOT HERE...
You're sure in a good mood.
HERE YOU GO, ARIA. IT'S SHIRO'S TREAT

SAKURA
.....
ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU TALKED TO ME ABOUT IT?
KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, MY MAN!
THANK YOU, I WILL.
SAKU-RA!
GONG
HEY THERE, YOU TWO. OUT ON A DATE?
WHAT A CUTE COUPLE. AH, HOW I ENVY YOU.


GASP
Not this pattern again!
AND SINCE WE ALREADY LOOK LIKE WE'RE ON ONE, WHY DON'T WE GO ON A REAL DATE?
WAIT A MINUTE!
WHAT? DON'T YOU THINK WE LOOK LIKE A COUPLE?
HUH?
I DON'T MIND BEING MISTAKEN FOR ONE IF YOU DON'T.
ERR...

I DON'T WANT TO SAY IT...
...BECAUSE YOU'LL BE AFRAID.
WELL, IT'S A LITTLE TOO LATE FOR THAT!
CLATTER
QUIT CHANGING THE SUBJECT!
I'M ASKING YOU A QUESTION!
YOU WILL BE AFRAID.
I KNOW IT.

SHIRO SURE IS TAKING HIS TIME
WONDER IF HE COLLAPSED SOMEWHERE.
WAIT, BUT–
SAKURA!
IT'S SO NICE OUT TODAY, WE SHOULD GO HANG OUT SOMEWHERE
AND DON'T WORRY. SHIRO CAN COME ALONG, TOO.
BUT, SAKURA!
But–
OKAY?

SAKURA WILL CHANGE.
HE'LL TAKE THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE... WITH THAT DEMON OF HIS.
IF HE KILLED JUST ONE PERSON...
...HE, "HIMSELF," WOULD VANISH.
THERE ARE SO MANY THOUGHTS ...
... SPINNING AROUND IN MY HEAD.
I'M GOING TO GO LOOK FOR SHIRO.
YOU WAIT RIGHT THERE.
REALLY, YOU OUGHTTA TRY TAKING UP EXERCISE ONCE—
SAKURA...
JUST WHAT ARE YOU...?
THERE YOU ARE, SHIRO.
WHEEZE
WHEEZE

THUNK
SAKURA ...
I WON'T LET YOU KILL MY CHILDREN!
EVEN IF IT MEANS...
はあっ HUFF
はあっ HUFF

...I AM KILLED BY YOU...
...SAKURA!
SAKURA!
SHIRO...
GET... ARIA...
HURRY...
HURRY!

SOMEBODY, CALL AN AMBULANCE!
SOMEONE'S BEEN STABBED!
きゃあああああ
WHERE IS THAT GIRL... ARIA!
ARIA!
LET GO OF ME! I NEED TO...
...KILL SAKURA!
I SAID GET AWAY!
SHIRO, GET AWAY FROM HERE!
AND TAKE... HER AWAY, TOO!
ARGH!
AUGH...

I SAID MOVE IT!
OUT OF THE WAY! LET ME THROUGH!
MOVE!
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
ARI...
NO! DON'T COME OUT!
D..DAMN IT.
DON'T! GOD-DAMN IT!
ARI...A!
SAKURA!

SHOCK

EEEK!
OH MY GOD!
AAAAAAAH!
NO, SAKURA ...YOU COULDN'T ...
IF HE KILLED...
IF HE KILLED... JUST ONE PERSON...
SAKU-RA...

SAKURA!
THOOM

SLICE
AAARRGH!
WHAAAA!
WH-WHAT IS THIS!?
THUNK
I HAVE TO STOP HIM!
SAKU-RA...
NO, ARIA! DON'T GO NEAR HIM!
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT!?

...I WILL KILL YOU.
OUT OF THE WAY, GIRL. I'M GOING TO HACK THAT BITCH TO PIECES.
IF YOU GET IN MY WAY...
SAKURA..
HOW CAN HE SAY SUCH A THING...?
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO?
THAT SAME FACE WAS SMILING WITH TENDERNESS NOT A MINUTE AGO.

I'M GOING TO WAKE YOU UP!
ARIA, NO! STAY AWAY FROM HIM!
I'M GOING TO WAKE YOU UP!
!
FOOM
She avoided it

I THOUGHT I MADE MYSELF VERY CLEAR, ARIA.
YOU--/
SAKURA/ SNAP OUT OF IT ALREADY/
SHIVER
GET IN MY WAY AGAIN, AND YOU'RE DEAD.

SAKURA!
WAKE UP YOU...YOU IDIOT!
HURRY!
SAKURA!
SAKURA!
SAKURA!

SAKURA!
WHA...
I...
A...
ARI...
ARI...A
PHEW

SAKU-
RA?
OH,
SAKURA
THANK
GOOD-
NESS...
SAKU-
RA...
I...
WHAT
DID
I...?

I FINALLY DID IT ...
I KILLED A HUMAN BEING!

Here's my address!
Chika Shiomi
c/o Go! Media Entertainment
5737 Kanan Rd #591
Agoura Hills, CA 91301
IF YOU'D LIKE, PLEASE SEND ME ANY FEED-BACK YOU HAVE.
HOW DID YOU LIKE VOLUME ONE?
HELLO, THIS IS SHIOMI.
HOPE TO SEE YOU IN VOLUME TWO! ♡
THE END ①／完

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...
SAKURA!
I'M SORRY ...
...FOR SCARING YOU.
BUT THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME.
CLOSE YOUR EYES, ARIA.

NIGHT OF THE BEASTS VOLUME 2
AVAILABLE JANUARY 2007

CHIKA SHIOMI

This is my first series released monthly, and being that I'm slow at drawing, I'm always in a pinch at the end of every month. Please cheer me on, everybody!

I was born February 21st. I live alone in Aichi Prefecture. I'm a Pisces, and my blood type is AB. My hobbies are skiing and going to hot water springs.

ABOUT THE MANGA-KA

Chika Shiomi has an amazing talent for depicting chilling and provocative horror stories that appeal to both shojo and shonen readers. Having created manga since 1993, starting with short stories in Akita Shoten's *Mystery Bonita* magazine, she has had a bountiful career of publishing both long-running series and short stories that have become popular both in Japan and abroad. Shiomi-sensei was born on February 21st and loves to travel and listen to Guns 'n Roses.

Aria's got a reputation as the toughest girl in school because she can't resist protecting those who get picked on by bullies. She's especially touchy about aggressive guys, which is why she's taken by surprise when her first kiss is stolen by a complete stranger. Not only does he keep making moves on her, but it seems like every time they meet, it's at the latest crime scene of a murder spree that's plaguing Aria's neighborhood. How is it that he seems to know all about the supernatural murderer of these innocent girls? And how will Aria react to his claim only SHE can save him from a destiny so bloody that even the violent deeds of black demon slaughtering victims all over town will pale in comparison?

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NIGHT OF THE BEASTS
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